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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/12/01 5:12pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

I have been keeping up on the limited information about this case. I am sure my one letter isnt going to make a lot of difference, but I must send it out, just at the chance that it may make a difference.

I am a linux user, and have been for 6 years. At first, it was a hobby, to toy around with, but now, it is the primary operating system on my computer, and also runs my business. I have put a lot of faith in Linux, because I feel it has matured enough to become a viable option.

This is not primarily a technical point I am trying to make, but an economic one. When I first started using linux, I didnt have a lot of money. I was a struggling student, and I couldnt afford much for my primary passion, which was (and still is) computers. I wanted to write programs, create graphics, and other things with computers. One of the problems was, I was using computer hardware which was horribly out of date, and wasnt really up to the task of performing in the manner in which these programs required. Even if it did, hardly could I afford the tools. I still remember saving money for 5 months to purchase a copy of Corel Draw, so I could create graphics.

Software was just entirely too expensive. Not that it isnt justified; I feel that these companies deserve to reap the rewards of creating a good product, on the other hand, I was a poor student, without hundreds of dollars to throw at the latest and greatest software. Plus, I wasnt using this software to make money, I was only using it to learn, for my own personal benefit. This made it hard to justify spending a lot of money on it, even if I had it.

Some people in this situation would turn to piracy. They would copy the program from a freind, or get it off the internet, because they couldnt or didnt want to pay for it. This wasnt an option for me, as I have always been an honest person, and was brought up to take the honest path in life. This meant, for me, making do with what I had, or, as I stated, saving for months, and putting forth a lot of money to see if it was right for me.

Then I found Linux. A free operating system, I didnt mind downloading it and trying it out. It was hard at first, to use, but after a while, I became accustomed to it. I had noticed, that all the programs I had wanted, were included for free. A state of the art graphics program. A compiler. CAD utilities. This thing had it all. Plus, my old computer ran a lot better under linux, which meant I didnt have to upgrade my computer as often.

I owe my whole career to Linux. Without it, I probably wouldnt be where I am today. As a result, I was able to advance and learn without financial boundaries, or becoming a thief. Today, my company depends on linux. We do high-end graphics work with "the Gimp", and our servers all run on linux. The money we save on software and licensing goes to gimp.org, and other foundations to keep them running. It really is a better deal. And now that I can afford high-end software, I still use linux as a primary tool, as it has developed into a professional class platform.

When I hear that Red Hat wants to donate Operating Systems to schools, and have Microsoft donate hardware, I think thats great. I have personal reasons to be biased about it, but I think its a great idea. It

lets poorer schools give kids a better education, and can mean the difference in millions of childrens lives. For "poor kids" who otherwise may not have any chance of acheiving thier goals, this may enable them to get marketable skills, a good job, and succeed in the workforce. This could enable a whole new generation of technically skilled individuals, who could grow together, and advance us farther than we ever imagined. With people coming from all areas of the country, rich or poor, we end up with a larger amount of technically skilled people, and advancement of our quality of life is that much faster. There could be the next Bill Gates, the next technical genius, sitting in a poor school in the middle of the inner city, sitting on a winning lottery ticket, holding the key to curing cancer, and this op

-Jeremy